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UNITED NATIONS

SECRETARIAT

ST/AI/189/Add.16*
7 June 1973

ADMINISTRATIVE INSTRUCTION

To: Members of the staff

Subject: REGULATIONS FOR THE CONTROL AND LIMITATION OF DOCUMENTATION

Addendum

CLASSIFICATION AND DECLASSIFICATION OF DOCUMENTS

1. This instruction relates to (a) documents distributed by the Secretariat under the provisions of ST/AI/189/Add.3/Rev.1 of 1 February 1973 and (b) other documents deposited with United Nations libraries in accordance with ST/AI/189/Add.12 of 16 February 1973.

2. "Classification", for the purpose of this instruction, refers to the initial decision that a document should be placed in the RESTRICTED category defined in paragraph 2 (c) of ST/AI/189/Add.3/Rev.1, or paragraph 2 (g) of ST/AI/189/Add.12. "Declassification" means the opening of initially RESTRICTED material to consultation, reference and quotation, it does not imply reissuance of the documents in another category of distribution. Though "declassification" would apply to material held by any unit of the Secretariat, it would, most notably, affect material held by United Nations libraries.

Classification

3. The decision to place material in the RESTRICTED category shall be taken by the head of the department or office originating the document, or by a senior official designated by him for this purpose. When considering such a decision, attention should be paid to the fact that the work of the United Nations should be "open" unless circumstances require confidentiality. Thus, the basic approach should be to use the RESTRICTED classification only as an exception. As a rule, should the document contain material provided by a Government or some other source outside the Secretariat on the express condition that it be treated confidentially,

* Superseding ST/AI/117 of 1 August 1956.

such document and/or its annexes would have to be classified as RESTRICTED. RESTRICTED should not be used to achieve a controlled distribution; that should be done by issuing the material in the LIMITED series and including special distribution instructions on the documents request form.

Declassification

4. Material initially RESTRICTED should be declassified when the passage of time or other events permit. In order to facilitate this operation, the Library shall prepare annually, in consultation with the Chief Editor, a list of the RESTRICTED series symbols of documents issued five or more years previously and held by the Library. After review by the Executive Office of the Secretary-General, the list, with such alterations as the Executive Office may direct, will be circulated to the originating offices with an indication that in the absence of other instructions the relevant material will be declassified by a specified date. This procedure should not prevent earlier declassification, and originating offices should themselves keep under review the material they have classified as RESTRICTED so as to ensure its declassification when and as soon as appropriate. Where the originating office takes the initiative in proposing declassification, the Executive Office of the Secretary-General should be consulted, and, if it agrees, the Library should be notified. It should also be understood that the originating office should not declassify material provided to it by others on a confidential basis without the agreement of the parties concerned.